



The Insider

www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

May 1, 2009

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a location near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See the schedule below for details.

Mickey's Blog: Cutting Budgets in the Small Room

For the past 10 days I have spent much of my time in Lansing holed up in a room in the Capitol with a handful of colleagues making cuts to the State Budget. Cuts are necessary because state tax collections are significantly down. The first three months of this year, January, February and March, all came in \$100 million below projections. April is an especially important month, because individual income tax is due April 15th, and quarterly business taxes are due. And April looks worse than the first three months. With our shortfall now about \$1.3 billion, cuts were necessary.

Why are tax revenues down? With the recession, more people are unemployed, and others are working fewer hours. That means lower income tax payments, and people who don't have jobs don't do a lot of spending, so you can imagine sales tax is down. Businesses don't thrive when people are afraid to spend. So business tax receipts go down when businesses are losing money or closing.

This Tuesday, the Governor will announce her Executive Order cuts to our current year budget. The Appropriation Committees from House and Senate will vote on the Executive Order, either up or down with no amendments. We have 10 days to do it, but I think they will be accepted quickly.

I remember a few years ago, the Governor offered an EO, and it was immediately rejected by the Michigan Legislature. I could not understand my colleagues at the time, because they had been calling for budget cuts, and then voted a package of cuts down. But I listened to them explain their reasons, and it turned out they just wanted to be consulted and to have some input into the list of cuts.

Not an unreasonable request.

I think Governor Granholm learned from that. I know I did. Since then, and especially this time, we meet before hand to negotiate the cuts. It is smarter politically. When budgets are short and you have to cut, it is better to get people to participate in the process, and buy into the end product. It is hard to say

no to advocates of many important and valuable programs. If your colleagues are criticizing you for making certain cuts and demanding restoration of programs, it gets even harder.

But if you don't have the money, you just have to say no. And if legislators on both sides of the aisle agree on the cuts, then people have a better sense that the cuts were fair and will be more accepting.

I have to say that this was one of the best negotiations I have ever been part of. Budget Director Bob Emerson did an outstanding job in ensuring that we concentrated on real savings, and not the smoke and mirrors accounting tricks that we used to engage in during the bad old days. My Republican colleagues in the Senate, Chairman Ron Jelinek, John Pappageorge and Mark Jansen, were fair and forthcoming with even their own favorite programs.

I was most impressed with Richard Hammel from the House, who represented the House Democrats in the discussions. I had not had the chance to work with him before, but he was open-minded, willing to make tough decisions, and had a true appreciation of the gravity of the task we faced.

What was unique and rare, is that we all shared a common vision of what the problem was and a common purpose of getting as large an EO cut as we could so that we can bring our spending into balance with our revenues.

It is not easy to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from programs that help people. But as I said, when you don't have the money, you have to make tough choices.

It just proves that when people work together, they can fix big problems and accomplish great things.

Mickey's Ends and Notes

MICHIGAN RESIDENTS CAN NOW APPLY FOR NEW ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENSE

The Michigan Secretary of State's Office recently announced that Michigan residents can now apply for the new enhanced driver's license (EDL). The dual-purpose EDL will serve as a driver's license and border crossing card allowing travelers to meet the tougher federal document requirements that go into effect at the country's borders on June 1.

The EDL will cost \$45 and an enhanced state identification card will cost \$30. Applicants who apply will receive them in two to three weeks, eliminating the need to carry multiple documents when returning to the United States from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean.

The EDL can be obtained at any Secretary of State SUPER! Center or other select branches. People with a current valid license will only need to show proof of a valid Social Security number and U.S. citizenship in addition to their driver's license. EDL's are voluntary, and residents can still receive standard driver's licenses and state identification cards.

For more information on how to obtain an enhanced driver's license go to:

http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1627_8669_53333---,00.html or visit www.michigan.gov/sos.

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

As part of the Buy Michigan First initiative, the Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) offers free seminars to guide business owners in bidding on and obtaining contracts with the

state. These seminars provide business owners an overview of the Michigan procurement process for commodities, services, information technology, design and construction, and real estate leasing. The department also offers a second seminar to prepare businesses to create a quality proposal.

This program encourages businesses, including under-represented businesses, to register as vendors and bid on more than 1,200 contracts valued at over \$19 billion. The purpose of Buy Michigan First is to increase awareness on how to do business with the state, increase the number of Michigan businesses registering as vendors and bidding on contracts, and to increase the awareness of resources available to small businesses. The end goal is to create jobs, diversify our economy, and drive down the cost of government.

Some seminars are held in partnership with the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC). PTAC's are not-for-profit organizations funded by the Defense Logistics Agency, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and local funding partners, and whose goal is to enhance the state's national defense and economic development by assisting Michigan-based businesses in obtaining federal, state and local government contracts.

There are two types of seminars to prepare a business owner to become a vendor including: "Contracting 101," which provides general information to guide business owners in bidding and obtaining contracts with the state. The other seminar offered is "Elements of a Quality Proposal," which is best for those who have already participated in a "Contracting 101" session. It provides a more detailed presentation to help a prospective vendor understand purchasing language and understand the things that should be in a quality proposal. Information is also provided on common mistakes that vendors make when they submit bids to the State.

To learn more about Buy Michigan First, including the most up-to-date schedule of seminars, please go to www.michigan.gov/BuyMichiganFirst.

REMEMBER TO VOTE MAY 5

Don't forget to cast your ballot on Tuesday, May 5th for local school elections. Voters who need to have their absentee ballot mailed to them must apply no later than 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 2. Absentee ballots can be obtained in person anytime through 4 p.m. on Monday, May 4 at your local clerk's office.

To find out if there is an election in your community on May 5th, visit the Secretary of State Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/sos> or check with your county clerk's office. The Michigan Voter Information Center is another helpful resource (www.michigan.gov/vote). It helps you determine whether you're registered to vote and it will direct you to your polling location.

It is important to note that Michigan has a voter identification requirement and you will be asked to present photo ID at the polls, such as a Michigan driver's license or identification card. If you do not have an acceptable form of photo ID or did not bring it with you, you can still vote by signing a brief affidavit stating that you're not in possession of a photo ID. Your ballot will be included with all others and counted on Election Day.

SENATE DEMS HIGHLIGHT OFFICE BUDGET ONLINE, CALLS FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY, MORE SAVINGS

Recently, the Senate Democrats highlighted the new posting of Senate Office Budgets online and called for more permanent transparency and savings for taxpayers. The Secretary of the Senate has listed the budgets on the official Senate webpage at www.senate.michigan.gov. You must then select the "Senators" link and the "Budgets" link will be posted on the bottom left hand corner.

Coffee Hours

*In response to requests from constituents, I have added coffee hours in Roseville and during the daytime. Here are my next scheduled coffee hours. Please feel to stop on by or make an appointment by calling my office.

June 29 1:30-2:30 p.m. Senator Switalski's District Office (31513 Gratiot, Suite B) Roseville	July 27 7-8 p.m. Clinton-Macomb Public Library (35891 South Gratiot) Clinton Township
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Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times-check local listings
(Comcast Channel 18/WOW Channel 10)

Contact My Office

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